

## **After More than Four Years, U.S. Warship Visits Mauritius**

By Ensign Ashley Lewis, USS Jarrett Public Affairs

### **For Immediate Release**

January 2, 2004

ABOARD USS JARRETT, At Sea -- On December 23, 2003, the guided missile frigate USS Jarrett (FFG 33) pulled into Port Louis, the capital city of the country of Mauritius—a small island off the coast of Madagascar known for beautiful beaches, tall peaks of volcanic rock, and rolling green hills covered in sugar cane. Jarrett crew members sought recreation on the island's white sand beaches and turquoise waters, and enjoyed a break from the rigors of ship life they had undergone since the ship began its Western Pacific deployment on August 22, 2003.

Christmas lights strung from stem to stern illuminated the flight deck where a red carpet was rolled out to show Jarrett's hospitality to the special guest of the evening, Prime Minister Paul Berenger, as well as the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Police Force Commissioner, the Commander of the National Coast Guard, and the Commander of the Mauritian Special Mobile Forces.

Port Louis welcomed the "Mighty J" with open arms, as it had been more than four years since the last time a U.S. war ship visited the port. Ms. Bisa Williams, the Charge d'Affaires from the U.S. Embassy in Mauritius greeted Jarrett and assisted the ship's officers and crew in putting on a reception for local dignitaries the first night in port.

Prime Minister Berenger, a former legislator whose career in government spans nearly thirty years, socialized with junior members of the crew, from the food service attendants to the petty officers who stood by as side boys to honor the dignitaries as they crossed the brow.

Cdr. Bob Hospodar, Jarrett's Commanding Officer, hosted the special guests with a marvelous spread prepared by the Mess Specialists in the ship's galley who served food and drinks in bright white chef's coats and tall paper hats. Officers and crew dressed up in summer white uniforms to enjoy the company of the distinguished visitors in a genteel atmosphere not often found aboard the ship.

-more-

JAR 2/2/2

Hospodar presented a plaque from the officers and crew to Mr. Berenger and commented that it was an honor for the ship to represent the United States in the beautiful country, which he referred to as a “hidden jewel”.

At the end of the evening, the Prime Minister departed and Cdr. Hospodar pulled aside crewmembers ranging from Third Class Petty Officer to Lieutenant Commander to sit in on a conference call with John Price, the U.S. Ambassador to Mauritius. Mr. Price sent his greetings from his family’s home in Utah where he was vacationing for the holidays. He expressed his dismay at having to miss the rare ship visit and commented on the significance of the Jarrett’s presence to the people of Mauritius.

“Mauritius was probably the most friendly port we have encountered on our deployment,” Hospodar said, adding that the crew was glad to reciprocate by hosting the reception on board for senior members of the government.

USS Jarrett is deployed with Expeditionary Strike Group 1—a new U.S. Navy task force that integrates amphibious warships and Marines with a cruiser, a destroyer, a frigate and a fast attack submarine. Since deploying in Aug. 2003, the ship has conducted various operations in the Arabian Gulf, the Horn of Africa, the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden in conjunction with coalition ships from allied nations.